

minds has, indeed, worked, as he suggested
to her in the
days before it took place, not as a mere sum
in addition
"One and one make two" she declared "No,
your
arithmetic is at fault" he retorted "One and
one, side
by side, in a proper integrated relationship,
make not
two but eleven " So, in truth, it has
proved, although
to attempt to express the result in any
mathematical
formula is futile, since it is eminently a human
result The
very completeness of the accomplishment
makes it difficult
now to see the component elements in
separation

Yet both Sidney and Beatrice had actually
been alive,
and very much alive, for more than thirty
years before
either was aware of the existence of the
other They
grew up in England, in her case largely, in
his wholly,
in London, but in worlds that knew not how
the other
lived, worlds between which, at that date,
yawned a social
gulf that, despite philanthropies and social
reform move-
ments and conscientious stirrings in many
minds, was
practically impassable He was a product of
London's
mean streets, she of England's country
houses What
made it worse was that he seriously professed
opinions
which, in the early 'nineties, were not
respectable Socialism,
in the mouth of a young lady of assured
position and social
charm, was not taken seriously When, as with
Mr Webb,
it must be taken seriously, it was dangerous
Beatrice
Potter dared not tell her dying father that she
was engaged
to a Socialist, it would have poisoned his last
hours Herbert

Spencer, her oldest friend, revised his
intention of making
her his literary executor when he found that
she intended
to do so awful a thing Many of her friends
simply thought
she must be mad For them, the social gulf
made the
thing impossible The more impossible that
she was not
only "one of us" she was a predestined leader
Belonging,
as she did, by birth, by wealth, by upbringing
and con-
nexion, to the governing class into which her
eight sisters